DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 466 936 CS 511 281

TITLE	Washington Assessment of Student Learning Test Specifications: Grade 10 Reading.
INSTITUTION	Washington Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia.
PUB DATE	2000-08-00
NOTE	29p.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/reading/.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Critical Reading; *Grade 10; High Schools; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Skills; *Reading Tests; Scoring; Test Content; *Test Items
IDENTIFIERS	*Essential Academic Learning Requirements WA; *Washington Assessment of Student Learning

ABSTRACT

This document outlines the test and item specifications for the Washington Assessment of Student Learning for tenth grade reading. The purpose of this test is to measure Washington tenth grade students' level of proficiency in the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in reading. The reading test described in the document contains literary, informational, and task-oriented reading selections. The document lists strands and learning targets such as: reading for literary experience; and reading to learn new information and to perform tasks. It explains the selection and distribution of reading passages and test items. A reading test map includes a listing of text types/strands; number of reading selections; and numbers of words per passage. The document describes test and item scoring and outlines some general considerations. An addendum describes the scoring of open-ended items. The items specifications explain that the test items were developed to ask students to demonstrate that they can comprehend important ideas and details in a text and that they can analyze, interpret, and think critically about a text. The document lists short answer and extended response item rules, and includes examples of learning targets, stimulus attributes, and item descriptions. (PM)

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ED 466 936

Washington Assessment of Student Learning
Test Specifications
Grade 10 Reading

August 2000

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this test is to measure Washington tenth-grade students' level of proficiency in the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in reading. The reading test will contain literary, informational, and task-oriented reading selections. All reading selections, up to 800 words and written at a difficulty level appropriate to their audience, will be accompanied by test items that assess proficiency in the components of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in reading. Test items will be of the following types in the proportions shown:

Multiple-choice: Student chooses from four responses provided (26-30 items)

Short-answer: Student constructs short response–phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s) (9-11 items)

Extended-response: Student constructs longer, more sustained response–sentences or paragraph(s) (2 items)

Each reading test form will attempt to test all identified Learning Targets (this term has been adopted for the sake of consistency between the state-level tests in the different subject areas) for each Strand, but this goal may not always be practical; not every text will allow every type of question to be asked. The test will offer three subscale reports in Reading for Literary Experience and three in Reading to Learn New Information and Reading to Perform a Task. (These reports correspond to the six Strands shown below.)

The first report for each type of text will reflect students' comprehension of important ideas and details; the second will reflect students' ability to analyze, interpret, and synthesize; the third will reflect students' ability to think critically about what they read. (In the chart below, EALR numbers are given in parentheses after each Learning Target.)

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II. STRANDS AND LEARNING TARGETS

Reading for Literary Experience:

Strand LC: Comprehends important ideas and details

Given a literary text to read silently, learners respond to items in which they use textual evidence to

1. Demonstrate understanding of theme or message and supportive details (2.1.2)

2. Summarize text (2.1.2)

3. Make inferences or predictions (2.1.4)

4. Interpret general and specialized vocabulary critical to the meaning of the text (1.2.1)

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Strand LA: Analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes

Given a literary text to read silently, learners respond to items in which they use textual evidence to

5. Apply understanding of literary elements (genres; story elements such as plot, character, setting; stylistic devices) and graphic elements/illustrations (1.4.3 or 1.4.1)

6. Compare/contrast elements of the text or make connections within the text (2.2.1)

7. Compare/contrast or make connections between or among texts or synthesize information from a variety of resources (2.2.1)

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Strand LT: Thinks critically

Given a literary text to read silently, learners respond to items in which they use textual evidence to

8. Analyze author's purpose and evaluate effectiveness for different audiences (includes fact/opinion, author's point of view, tone, and use of persuasive devices, bias, stereotype) (2.3.2, 2.3.3)

9. Evaluate reasoning and ideas/themes related to the text (2.3.1 or 2.3.4)

10. Extend information beyond text (make generalizations beyond the text to a broader idea or concept, or apply information to other texts or situations, or give a response to reading) (2.3.1 or 2.3.5, 2.3.6, 2.3.7)

Reading to Learn New Information and Reading to Perform Tasks

Strand IC: Comprehends important ideas and details

Given an informational or task-oriented text to read silently, learners respond to items in which they use textual evidence to

11. Demonstrate understanding of major ideas and supportive details (2.1.2)

12. Summarize text (2.1.2)

13. Make inferences or predictions (2.1.4)

14. Interpret general and specialized vocabulary critical to the meaning of the text (1.2.1)

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Strand IA: Analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes

Given an informational or task-oriented text to read silently, learners respond to items in which they use textual evidence to

15. Apply understanding of text features (titles, headings, and other information divisions, table of contents, indexes, glossaries, prefaces, appendices, captions) and graphic features (1.5.2)

16. Compare/contrast elements of the text or make connections within the text (2.2.1)

17. Compare/contrast or make connections between or among texts or synthesize information from a variety of resources (2.2.1)

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Strand IT: Thinks critically

Given an informational or task-oriented text to read silently, learners respond to items in which they use textual evidence to

18. Analyze author's purpose and evaluate effectiveness for different audiences (includes fact/opinion, author's point of view, tone, and use of persuasive devices, bias, stereotype) (2.3.2, 2.3.3)

19. Evaluate reasoning and ideas related to the text (2.3.1 or 2.3.4)

20. Extend information beyond text (make generalizations beyond the text to a broader idea or concept, or apply information to other texts or situations, or give a response to reading) (2.3.1 or 2.3.5, 2.3.6, 2.3.7)

III. READING PASSAGES

Reading passages used in the test should be drawn from published sources.

Literary text may include poetry, essays, short stories, novel excerpts, biographies, nonfiction narratives, and plays.

Informational text may include encyclopedias and other reference materials, pamphlets, book excerpts, newspaper and magazine articles, letters to an editor.

Task-oriented text may consist of schedules, maps, recipes, instructions, newspaper want ads, consumer reports, travel books, first aid or other manuals, catalogs, yellow pages, credit card or job applications, and other such pieces likely to be within the experience of a tenth-grade student.

Where possible, selections should promote a school-to-work connection. Where appropriate, the passages should utilize illustrations and other graphic features.

Each assessment will contain one or more selections made up of two or more short passages, e.g., a poem and a short piece of fiction, or a set of directions, a short informational text, and a short essay; these groupings will allow construction of items that call for students to make

connections among texts.

Passages should not exhibit cultural or other forms of bias that might disadvantage any group (or groups) of students and should avoid subject matter that might prompt emotional distress on the part of some students.

It is critical that the reading texts used be well written, of interest to tenth-grade students, and, in all appropriate cases, factually correct.

Reading test passages should also reflect Washington's cultural diversity, and as they are presented they should possess structural integrity that allows them to be self-contained.

Permission to use selections from copyrighted material will be obtained as necessary.

The reading difficulty of the passages will be validated using traditional readability formulas and teacher judgment.

The passages' overall suitability will be judged by the committee.

IV. TEST ITEMS

Reading test items should always focus on what is essential and consequential in a given text.

Test items should be tied closely and particularly to the passage from which they derive, so that the impact of outside knowledge, while never wholly avoidable, can be diminished.

Test items should be varied and should address as many strands/learning targets as the passages allow.

The test will contain 26-30 multiple-choice items; each of these will have one correct answer and three distractors, the four choices being approximately the same length, having the same format, and being syntactically and semantically parallel.

The test will contain 9-11 short-answer items; each of these will require students to construct a short response, defined as phrase(s), sentence(s), or a paragraph, and will focus on one learning target.

The test will also contain 2 extended-response items; each of these will require students to construct a longer, more sustained response, defined as sentences or paragraph(s), and will focus on one learning target.

Order of presentation of item types will be dictated by logic.

With grouped passages, items for each will follow each passage, or they may follow two passages together that should not be separated. Items that require connections between and among the passages will appear last.

There should be more than two items that require students to make connections between and among the passages.

V. DISTRIBUTION OF READING SELECTIONS AND TEST ITEMS

Each reading test form will include three literary selections, generating approximately half the total test points, and one or two informational selections and one or two task-oriented selections, generating approximately half the total test points. In addition, one or more selections in each form of the test will consist of two or more short passages, e.g., a poem and a short piece of fiction, or a set of directions, a short informational text, and a short essay. These groupings will allow construction of items that call for students to make connections between and among texts.

Many of the selections will be short, e.g., 300 words.

One selection on a form will be longer (as long as 800 words) to allow for development of items that go with more extended text.

The reading selections together total about 2500 words.

Total number of multiple-choice items is not to exceed 30.

Total number of short-answer items is not to exceed 11.

Total number of extended-response items is not to exceed 2.

The following table contains a matrix showing item distribution by text types, strands, and learning targets in the test.

Reading Test Map for Grade 10 WASL

Text types/ Strands	Number of learning targets	Number of selections	Number of MC Items	Number of SA Items	Number of ER Items	Number
Literary Selections	10	3	10-15	3-6	1	up to 1300
Comprehends important ideas and details	4		3-5	1-2		
Analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes	3		2-5	1-3	0-1	
Thinks critically	3		2-5	1-3	0-1	
Informational and Task-oriented Selections	10	3-4	10-15	3-6	1	up to 1300
Comprehends important ideas and details	4		3-5	1-2		
Analyzes, interprets and synthesizes	3		2-5	1-3	0-1	

Thinks critically	3		2-5	1-3	0-1	
Totals	20	6-7	26-30	9-11	2	up to 2500

VI. TEST AND ITEM SCORING

Each multiple-choice item is worth 1 point, each short-answer item is worth 2 points, and each extended-response item is worth 4 points.

Reading Test: Typical distribution of score points by item type

Type	Number of Items	Total Points	Percent of the Total Score
Multiple-choice	28	28	50%
Short-answers	10	20	36%
Extended-response	2	8	14%
Total	40	56	

VII. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is not possible to measure every learning target on every form of the test. However, learning targets from each strand must be tested on each form.

The material presented will be culturally diverse, well written, and of interest to tenth-grade students, and the passages and items will be fairly presented in order to gain a true picture of students' reading skills.

Each multiple-choice item will contain a question (or incomplete statement) and four answer (or completion) options, only one of which is correct. Correct answers will be distributed approximately evenly among A's, B's, C's, and D's.

Each short-answer or extended-response item will give clear indications of what is required of students; a scoring guide will be developed for each constructed-response item, and information from the pilot testing will be used to refine these scoring guides for use with the final forms of the test. Scoring guides will follow a "focused holistic" model in which the score for the response is based on overall quality but also results from a focus on several important features of the student's performance.

Short-answer items will be scored with a 3-level scoring guide (0-2) in which students may receive full credit, partial credit, or no credit.

Extended-response items will be scored with a 5-level scoring guide (0-4); the levels may be summarized as Extensive, Essential, Partial, Unsatisfactory, and No credit.

To the greatest extent possible, no item on the test will "clue" the answer to any other item.

The strand and learning target assessed will be specified for each item.

Items will not display unfair representations of genders, races, disabled individuals, or cultural or

religious groups. Items will not contain elements that may disadvantage a particular gender, race, culture, religious, or disabled group.

Across all forms, there will be balance of gender and active/passive roles by gender.

No resource materials may be used by students during testing.

Responses will be scored with emphasis on communication of ideas. Conventions of writing (sentence structure, word choice, usage, grammar, and mechanics) will be disregarded unless they seriously interfere with communication.

Estimated Time for Reading Test: 75 minutes, broken into two sessions.

VIII. Addendum (Feb. 1999) SCORING OF OPEN-ENDED ITEMS

Individual scoring criteria will be developed for each constructed-response item. Short-answer items will be scored on a scale of 0 to 2 points, and extended-response items will be scored on a scale of 0 to 4 points. The following scoring criteria are used to assess basic comprehension of main ideas and details and analysis, interpretation, and critical thinking about text. Specific scoring criteria will be developed for each item based on these generic rules.

Scoring Rules for Short Answer Items

Scoring rules for items that assess <u>main ideas and details</u>:

2 A two point response:

• shows thorough comprehension of main idea and important details

• uses ample, relevant information from text(s) to support responses

1 A one point response:

• shows partial comprehension of main idea and important details (may grasp main idea but show difficulty distinguishing between important and unimportant details; may miss part of fundamental who/what/where/when/why)

• attempts to use information from text(s) to support responses; support may be limited or irrelevant

0 A 0 point response shows little or no understanding of the passage main ideas and details.

Scoring rules for items that assess <u>analysis, interpretation, and critical thinking about text</u>:

2 A two point response:

• analyzes appropriate information and/or makes thoughtful connections between whole texts/parts of texts

• develops thoughtful interpretations of text

• uses sufficient, relevant evidence from text(s) to support claims

1 A one point response:

• analyzes limited information and/or makes superficial connections between whole texts/parts of texts

• develops conventional or simplistic interpretations of text

• attempts to use evidence from text(s) to support claims; support may be limited or irrelevant

0 A 0 point response shows little or no understanding of the passage main ideas and details.

Scoring rules for items that assess summarizing and paraphrasing main ideas:

2 A two point response shows thorough comprehension of main ideas

1 A one point response shows partial comprehension of main ideas

0 A 0 point response shows little or no understanding of the passage main ideas and details.

Scoring Rules for Extended Response Items

Scoring rules for items that assess analysis, interpretation, and thinking about text:

4 Points: Meets all relevant criteria

• thoroughly analyzes appropriate information and/or makes insightful connections between whole texts/parts of texts

• develops insightful interpretations of text

• uses ample, relevant evidence from text(s) to support claims

3 Points: Meets most relevant criteria

• analyzes appropriate information and/or makes thoughtful connections between whole texts/parts of texts

• develops thoughtful interpretations of text

• uses sufficient, relevant evidence from text(s) to support claims

2 Points: Meets some relevant criteria

• analyzes limited information and/or makes superficial connections between whole texts/parts of texts

• develops conventional or simplistic interpretations of text

• attempts to use evidence from text(s) to support claims; support may be limited or irrelevant

1 Point: Meets few relevant criteria

• shows difficulty analyzing information and/or makes weak connections between whole texts/parts of texts

• may not develop beyond literal interpretation of text

• uses little or no evidence to support claims

Washington Assessment of Student Learning
Item Specifications
Grade 10 Reading

August 2000

The purpose of this test is to measure Washington tenth-grade students' level of proficiency in the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in reading. To thoughtfully and equitably achieve this goal, test items will be developed that ask students to demonstrate that they can comprehend important ideas and details in a text and that they can analyze, interpret, and think critically about a text. Given the reading test's goal, test items must be reliable and fair and address the learning targets listed in the following pages.

There are some general considerations that can make the task of item writing more efficient and fruitful. These considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

Ask questions that deal with issues and details that are of consequence in the selection and central to students' understanding and interpretation of a given text.

Take care that all items avoid language that shows bias or is otherwise likely to be offensive to or to disadvantage a particular group of students.

Word items precisely and clearly. The better focused an item, the more reliable and fair it is certain to be, and the more likely all students will understand in the same way what is required of them.

Make sure that all multiple-choice options–key and distractors–are similar in length and in syntax; students should not be able to rule out a wrong answer or identify a correct response simply by virtue of its looking or sounding different.

Create distractors that adopt the language and sense of material in the selection so that students must think their way to the correct answer rather than simply identify incorrect responses by virtue of a distractor's obviously inappropriate nature.

Distractors should always be plausible (but of course incorrect) in the context of the selection.

All items must clearly indicate what is expected in a response and must help students focus their responses.

Constructed-response items are of two types: short-answer and extended-response.

Short-answer items should require a more limited response than extended-response items.

The two types of constructed-response items may also be differentiated by the number of lines available for the response.

In summary: Reading test items should ask questions that address issues of importance in a text, and those questions should be consequential, concise, focused, and fair.

Additional Rules for Developing Constructed-response Items: Grade 10

Short Answer Item Rules

Items should ask students to give evidence they have understood or analyzed text. This usually means ending with "Support your answer with information from the story" or, preferably, "Support your answer with an example (or two examples, details, ideas) from the story."

Item stems will be clear and succinct as possible.

Each short-answer item will give clear indications of what is required of students (e.g., if two examples are required, the stem will indicate this; if a generalization and a supporting example are required, the stem will indicate this).

Anything required by the scoring rule will be asked for in the item stem.

Any short-answer item that requires personal response or connections beyond the text will ask for references to how the student's ideas relate to the text (e.g., "How did the story help you . . .?").

Do not use the format that gives students a choice of (a number of) viable answers and require students to choose one and support it.

As much as possible, the language of the items should reflect the language of the strands and learning targets (and thus the Essential Academic Learning Requirements). So, for example, ask students to "analyze" when appropriate.

Items should not be broken into parts with lines following each part.

Extended Response Item Rules

Items should ask students to give evidence they have understood or analyzed text. This usually means ending with "Support your answer with information from the story" or, preferably, "Support your answer with three specific examples (details, ideas) from the story."

Item stems will be clear and succinct as possible.

Each extended-response item will give clear indications of what is required of students (e.g., if a generalization and three supporting examples are required, the stem will indicate this).

Anything required by the scoring rule will be asked for in the item stem.

Any extended-response item that requires personal response or connections beyond the text will ask for references to how the student's ideas relate to the text (e.g., "How did the story help you . . .?"). NOTE: AVOID PERSONAL RESPONSE EXTENDED.

Do not use the format that gives students a choice of (a number of) viable answers and require students to choose one and support it.

As much as possible, the language of the items should reflect the language of the strands and learning targets (and thus the Essential Academic Learning Requirements). So, for example, ask students to "analyze" when appropriate.

Items should not be broken into parts with lines following each part.

For each learning target, item specifications are organized under three headings or sections:

Learning Target

Stimulus Attributes

Item Description

The first heading states the learning target, which summarizes one or more benchmarks as identified in the reading section of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) Technical Manual (February 26, 1997).

The second section indicates the appropriate characteristics (format and content) of the reading stimuli that will precede any items.

The third section gives a description of the items that can be used to assess the learning target. This will include the rules for item types, item formats, response formats, and distractors.

Strand LC: Comprehends important ideas and details

Learning Target 1: Demonstrate understanding of theme or message and supportive details. (2.1.2)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary text

2. Content: The selection must contain a clear theme or message that is supported by details.

Item Description:

1. Possible item type: M, S

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students demonstrate understanding of a theme or message or of the details that support it.

3. Response format: Response may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem:

What is the author's message in this story?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response is the best statement of the message of the story.

b. An incorrect response may contain an idea not included in the passage.

c. An incorrect response may contain an unimportant idea that is stated in the passage.

Example of stem:

The message of this poem has to do with sharing. Which of the following ideas from the poem helps get this message across?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response is a detail that supports the message.

b. An incorrect response may be a detail in the poem that does not support the message.

c. An incorrect response may be a detail that appears to support the message but is not actually included in the selection.

5. Short-answer items:

Example of item:

What is the theme of this poem? Give a specific example from the poem to support your answer.

Strands LC/IC: Comprehends important ideas and details

Learning Targets 2 and 12: Summarize text. (2.1.2)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary, informational, task-oriented text

2. Content: The selection must be substantive enough to allow for the type of summary called for

in the item.

Item Description:

1. Possible item type: M, S

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students choose or construct a reasonable summary of a text.

Note: The content committee prefers that students write rather than choose summaries. This cannot be done across the board, because the number of short answer items is limited for each test. However, it could be done at least once per test. So the short-answer option below should be used with about a third or a fourth of the passages. Then, in operational forms of the test, we can attempt to include one written summary each year.

3. Response format: Response may be phrase(s), as in a title, sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem:

Which sentence best summarizes this (selection)?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response is the best summary.

b. An incorrect response may contain a related idea not included in the passage.

c. An incorrect response may contain an idea from the passage that is too narrow to be acceptable as a summary.

5. Short-answer items:

Example of item: (informational)

Write a paragraph to summarize the main points of this selection in your own words. Be sure to include at least (number) points in your summary.

Example of item: (literary)

Write a paragraph to summarize the main events in this story in your own words. Be sure to include at least (number) points in your summary.

Strands LC/IC: Comprehends important ideas and details

Learning Targets 3 and 13: Make inferences or predictions. (2.1.4)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary, informational, task-oriented text

2. Content:

For inference: A significant idea in the selection must be indirectly stated; the selection must contain sufficient clues that the idea may be inferred.

For prediction: A selection must provide clues about a likely outcome or action without stating it.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students use evidence from the text to grasp an important idea not directly stated in the text, or that they make a reasonable prediction of an outcome or action.

3. Response format: Response may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem for Inference:

What conclusion can be drawn from reading this selection?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response is an idea that can reasonably be inferred from the text.

b. An incorrect response may contain an idea that the selection does not really support.

Example of stem for Prediction:

What do you think (character) will do now that (cite circumstances at end of story)?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response is an outcome that can reasonably be predicted given the information in the text.

b. An incorrect response is not appropriate given the information in the text.

5. Short-answer items:

Example for Inference:

Why do you think (character) did (action)? Provide evidence or examples from the story to support your answer.

How did (character) feel when (event) happened? Provide evidence or examples from the story to support your answer.

Example for Prediction:

What do you think (character) will do now that (cite circumstances at end of story)? Provide evidence or examples from the story to support your answer.

Strands LC/IC: Comprehends important ideas and details

Learning Targets 4 and 14: Interpret general and specialized vocabulary critical to the meaning of the text. (1.2.1)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary, informational, task-oriented text

2. Content: The selection containing the vocabulary (word, phrase, or expression) must have sufficient context clues for the reader to interpret its meaning. Note: This learning target should involve more than definition; it should involve interpretation.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students interpret a word, phrase, or expression critical to the meaning of a text.

3. Response format: Word(s), phrase(s), or sentence(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem:

What is the meaning of (phrase or expression) in this (selection)?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response, which may be understood from the text through thoughtful reading.

b. Incorrect responses are syntactically correct and related in some general way to ideas in the selection but that are clearly incorrect.

Example of stem:

Why does the author use the word *clever* to describe the main character in this selection?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response requires interpretation of the author's intent.

b. Incorrect responses represent slightly incorrect interpretations of the author's intent.

Strand LA: Analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes

Learning Target 5: Apply understanding of literary elements (genres; story elements such as plot, character, setting; stylistic devices) and graphic elements/illustrations (1.4.1, 1.4.3)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary text

2. Content: The selection may lend itself to analysis of one or more of the following elements:

a. Plot: A series of episodes in which a conflict is developed and resolved.

b. Characters: The people, animals, or personified objects in the story.

c. Setting: The location(s) and time(s) of the story.

d. Theme: The central idea or message in a work of literature.

e. Point of view: The vantage point from which the author presents the story.

f. Conflict: The central problem that drives the story.

g. Resolution: Follows climax, or the point of highest interest.

h. Stylistic devices: For Grade 10, figurative language such as simile, metaphor, personification; exaggeration; irony; humor, sarcasm; symbols; dialogue and other ways of developing characterization; and mood.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S, E

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students give evidence of having analyzed how some significant literary elements interact.

3. Response format: Response may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem:

How does the setting of this story impact its plot?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response represents a reasonable conclusion drawn through analysis of the selection.

b. An incorrect response may be a faulty conclusion that could be drawn through less-than-careful analysis of the selection.

5. Short-answer items:

Example of item:

Give an example of (literary device) from the selection. Explain the point the author makes with this (literary device).

6. Extended-response item:

Example of item:

Analyze how the story would be different if it had been told from (character's) point of view. Discuss two events to support your answer.

OR

Analyze how (character's actions or trait) contributes to the conflict in the story. Use an example from the story to support your response. **Explain how this example provides support.**

NOTE: I AM NOT SURE HOW I CAN **Explain how this example provides support.** I THINK THIS MAY NOT WORK. WHAT WOULD THIS LOOK LIKE? BELOW IS AN ATTEMPT AT A RESPONSE. DOES MY LAST LINE EXPLAIN HOW MY EXAMPLE PROVIDES SUPPORT? OR WILL THIS INVITE CONFUSION AND REDUNDANCY?

Example: Mike's jealous nature is the reason he and Jim begin to fight. He finds out Jim has been awarded first place in the contest and he feels cheated. He gets very angry, especially after he broods about it for a while. He confronts Jim, and they get in a fight. This example shows how Mike's jealous nature gets him in trouble in this story.

Strands LA/IA: Analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes

Learning Targets 6 and 16: Compare/contrast elements of the text or make connections within the text. (2.2.1)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary, informational, and task-oriented text

2. Content: The selection must contain sufficient information for the reader to identify similarities and differences in elements of the text or to make connections (such as cause and effect) within a text.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S, E

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students compare/contrast or make connections between and among elements within a text.

3. Response format: Responses may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem for compare/contrast:

Which sentence tells how (two characters in the story) are similar?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response identifies an appropriate similarity.

b. Incorrect responses do not identify similarities; they may focus on something that is true of one character or the other but not both.

Example of stem for connections within text:

Which sentence explains why (event) happened?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response is a reasonable statement of causation.

b. Incorrect responses are events in the selection that thoughtful reading reveals are not really the cause.

5. Short-answer items:

Example of item stem for compare/contrast:

How are (two elements in the selection) similar and different?

Example of item for connections within text:

Explain why (event) happened.

6. Extended-response items:

Example of item stem for compare/contrast:

Write a paragraph describing how (characters) are similar and how they are different. Then analyze how this similarity and difference influences (a text-based outcome).

Example of item stem for connections within text:

Analyze how (events in the selection) cause (culminating event in the selection). Choose two (events) to discuss in depth.

Strands LA/IA: Analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes

Learning Targets 7 and 17: Compare/contrast or make connections between or among texts or synthesize information from a variety of resources. (2.2.1)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary, informational, and task-oriented text

2. Content: Groups of selections are presented to give students opportunities to make connections between or among texts; these are likely to be of the comparison/contrast variety, but may include cause/effect or other connections. These selections must contain sufficient information for the reader to analyze connections, or they must present information for students to synthesize.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S, E

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students make connections between or among texts (example: comparison/contrast, cause/effect) or synthesize information from a variety of resources.

3. Response format: Responses may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem for compare/contrast between/among texts:

How does (story character's) feeling about (subject) compare to the poet's feeling about (subject)?

Example of response choices:

The correct response identifies an appropriate similarity.

b. Incorrect responses identify elements that exist in one passage but not in the other(s)

Example of stem for cause/effect between/among texts:

After reading both the story and the article, what seems to be the reason for (event)?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response is a reasonable statement of causation that may be gleaned from reading two or more selections carefully.

b. Incorrect responses are statements of causation that careful reading of two or more selections reveals to be unsound.

5. Short-answer items:

Example of item stem for compare/contrast between/among a poem and story:

Which character in the story is most like the speaker in the poem? Explain how they are alike and how they are different.

Write a paragraph describing how (author of Selection 1) and (author of Selection 2) would respond to (a hypothetical situation).

Example of item stem for synthesize:

How important was (item) to people in the nineteenth century? Use the story and the article to answer this question.

6. Extended-response items:

Example of item prompt for compare/contrast between/among texts:

Suppose you were to take (position on issue raised in the selections). Write a paragraph discussing what information from each selection you would use to support your position. **Explain how this information provides support.** (SEE COMMENT ON LT 5 ABOVE)

Strands LT/IT: Thinks critically

Learning Targets 8 and 18: Analyze author's purpose and evaluate effectiveness for different audiences. (2.3.2, 2.3.3)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary, informational, and task-oriented text

2. Content: The selection must allow consideration of author's purpose and intended audience. The selection may lend itself to analysis of one or more of the following:

a. Fact/opinion

b. Author's point of view

c. Author's tone

d. Author's craft

e. Author's use of argument and propaganda techniques (from Listening/Observing EALRs)

Snob appeal: Appealing to social or intellectual pretensions.

Endorsement: Basing an argument on what a famous person says.

Name-calling: Applying a negative term or label to a person or product.

Bandwagon: Arguing that you should do something because everyone else is doing it.

Hasty generalization: Drawing a conclusion that is too broad or based on too little evidence.

Poisoning the well: (same as loaded words) Using emotional words instead of arguments.

Transfer: Trying to transfer people's good feelings about one thing to something else.

Plain folks: The opposite of snob appeal; appealing to a desire to be plain and unpretentious.

f. Author's use of bias

g. Author's use of stereotype

NOTE: If an item calls for evaluation of the logic and reasoning of these elements in a text, the item is classified as Learning Target 9 or 19.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S, E

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students analyze author's purpose and/or evaluate the effectiveness of a text for different audiences. Note: In items analyzing author's use of argument and/or propaganda techniques, define terms.

3. Response format: Responses may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice item:

Example of stem:

Which sentence in this advertisement is an example of the author's use of a "Bandwagon" argument (urging people to do something because everyone is doing it)?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response identifies an appropriate sentence.

b. Incorrect responses identify sentences that do not represent this type of argument; they may represent other types of arguments, or they may not be representative of any type of argument at all.

5. Short-answer items:

Example of items:

Who is the audience for this poem? How do you know? Support your answer with evidence from the poem.

What is the author's purpose in this poem? How does he use (the poem's structure) to achieve his purpose? Support your answer with information from the poem.

7. Extended-response items:

Example of item:

Write a paragraph giving (number) of the author's main arguments for her/his point of view on (issue discussed in selection). How do you think she/he would feel about (related issue)? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

Strand LT: Thinks critically

Learning Target 9: Evaluate reasoning and ideas/themes related to the text (2.3.1, 2.3.4)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary text

2. Content: The selection must allow consideration and evaluation of ideas or themes related to it.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S, E

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students evaluate reasoning or ideas or themes related to a literary text. Conclusions and generalizations that may be drawn from the text may be the focus of this evaluation.

3. Response format: Responses may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem:

What is wrong with (character's) reasoning in this story?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response identifies a problem with the reasoning demonstrated by the character.

b. Incorrect responses may identify a problem with another character's reasoning or a problem in reasoning that is not a part of the story.

5. Short-answer items:

Example of items:

Is the following a reasonable conclusion that may be drawn from the selection? Why or why not? Refer to the selection to support your answer. (Then state a conclusion that may or may not be reasonably drawn from the selection.)

After reading the first part of the selection you might think (idea). Does the rest of the selection support this (idea)?

6. Extended-response items:

Example of item:

Write a paragraph to analyze and evaluate the (strategies/arguments) the author uses to get her point across in this (essay). Consider what (strategies/arguments) the writer uses and how effective each (strategy/argument) is. Use evidence from the selection in your response.

Strands LT/IT: Thinks critically

Learning Targets 10 and 20: Extend information beyond text (make generalizations beyond the text to a broader idea or concept, or apply information to other texts or situations, or give a response to reading) (2.3.1, 2.3.5, 2.3.6, 2.3.7)

Note: Washington prefers focusing on the first and second parts of the target and avoiding the third.

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Literary, informational, and task-oriented text

2. Content: The selection must be substantive enough to allow a student to extend information and ideas they have gotten from reading to situations or ideas beyond the text.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S, E

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students extend what they have learned from the reading. They may be called on to make generalizations beyond the text to a broader idea or concept or to apply information to other texts or situations, or to give a response to reading.

3. Response format: Response may be phrase(s), sentence(s) or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem for generalization:

After reading this article, which of the following generalizations can you make?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response identifies a generalization that can be logically made from reading the selection.

b. An incorrect response may identify a generalization that is too broad or based on too little evidence.

c. An incorrect response may identify a generalization that appears to be reasonable but is flawed in its logic.

5. Short-answer items:

Example of item stem for personal response to text:

Would you have wanted to travel west as pioneers did in the story? Support your answer by referring to specific events in the story.

6. Extended-response items:

Example of item stem for applying information to another text or situation:

How could you use what you learned about (subject) in this selection to (do a particular task)? Refer to specific information in the selection to explain your ideas.

How would you handle (character's) problem in the story? Support your answer by referring to specific events in the story.

Strand IC: Comprehends Important Ideas and Details

Learning Target 11: Demonstrate understanding of major ideas and supportive details. (2.1.2)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Informational and task-oriented text

2. Content: The selection must be substantive enough that major and supporting ideas can be ascertained.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students focus on major or supporting ideas and relationship between/among them.

3. Response format: Response may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem:

Which sentence gives the most important idea in the (selection)?

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response is the major idea in the selection.

b. An incorrect response may be an idea that is contained in the selection but is not the major idea.

c. An incorrect response may be an idea that is related in some way to the major idea, but it is not in the selection.

5. Short-answer items:

Examples of items:

Give two of the most important ideas in the selection.

Strand IA: Analyzes, interprets, and synthesizes

Learning Target 15: Apply understanding of text features (titles, headings, and other information divisions, table of contents, indexes, glossaries, prefaces, appendices, captions) and graphic features. (1.5.2)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Informational and task-oriented text

2. Content: The selection may contain one or more of the following elements:

a. titles, headings, other information divisions

b. table of contents

c. index

d. glossary

e. preface

f. appendix

g. captions

h. graphic features

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students give evidence of having analyzed some significant text feature.

3. Response format: Response may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph.

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem:

Look at (graphic) and (locate or interpret information).

Examples of response choices:

a. The correct response indicates appropriate location or interpretation of information.

b. An incorrect response may not be the best choice because it focuses on an idea not represented in the graphic.

c. An incorrect response may be too narrow to be acceptable.

d. An incorrect response may not be true.

5. Short-answer items:

Example of item:

What important information do the (photographs, captions) add to the article?

Use the table of contents and the index to decide where to look to locate information about (topic).

Strand IT: Thinks critically

Learning Target 19: Evaluate reasoning and ideas related to the text (2.3.1, 2.3.4)

Stimulus Attributes:

1. Format: Informational and task-oriented text

2. Content: The selection must allow consideration and evaluation of ideas related to it.

Item Description:

1. Possible item types: M, S, E

2. Item format: Clearly states requirement that students evaluate reasoning or ideas related to an informational or task-oriented text. (Task-oriented texts may include display advertisements created for the purposes of the test.) Conclusions and generalizations that may be drawn from the text may be the focus of this evaluation.

3. Response format: Responses may be phrase(s), sentence(s), or paragraph(s).

4. Multiple-choice items:

Example of stem:

What is wrong with making the following generalization after reading the selection? (Give a generalization that is too broad to be drawn from the selection)

Example of response choices:

a. The correct response indicates that the generalization is too broad.

b. Incorrect responses may identify a problem the statement does not have.

5. Short-answer items:

Examples of items:

Evaluate the way in which this advertisement appeals to readers. Is it an effective advertisement? Explain why or why not. Refer to specific elements of the advertisement in your explanation.

Is the following a reasonable conclusion that may be drawn from the selection? Why or why not? Use evidence from the selection to support your answer. (Then state a conclusion that may or may not be reasonably drawn from the selection.)

After reading the first paragraph of the selection, you might make the generalization that (state a generalization that might be reasonably made from reading the first paragraph). Does the rest of the selection support this generalization? Explain your answer with details from the selection.

6. Extended-response items:

Example of item:

Write a paragraph to analyze and evaluate the (strategies) the author uses to get her point

across in this (selection). Consider what (strategies) the writer uses and how effective each (strategy) is. Use evidence from the selection in your response.

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